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Paper: Sustainability

Comparative study on availability of digital libraries in universities and special libraries in Sri Lanka

The three main objectives of this research are: 1) Availability of digital library in universities and special libraries in Sri Lanka, 2) Difficulties encountered in the initial phase, 3). Suggestions to surmount those difficulties. Twenty nine (29) university libraries and thirty eight (38) special libraries were selected as the sample, out of the 36 university libraries and 76 special libraries, and a questionnaire used as the method of data collection.

The results revealed that 9.09% of the university libraries and 17.85% of the special libraries were initiating digital library facility within their libraries. Accordingly, 54.54% of the university libraries and 14.28% of the special libraries have been already planning to initiate their own digital libraries. Further, 36% of the university libraries and 67.85% of the special libraries did not have any proper plan to build up digital library facilities. Among the total number of libraries surveyed, which comprised of already initiated digital libraries, 50% of the GENISIS and 50% of the GREENSTONE software have been used for digitization in university libraries. Besides that, 20% of the WINISIS, 20% of the ACROBAT, 20% of the OMINIPAGE and 40% of the GREENSTONE software respectively had been used to initiate digital library in special libraries. In addition, 50% of the university libraries and 20% of the special libraries have online access facility. But majority of special libraries had only off-line access facility to their digital collections.

Several critical problems pertaining to the initiative of digital libraries were lack of knowledge about creating a digital library, lack of sufficient infrastructure facilities, lack of financial support, lack of uninterrupted power supply and the limited number of computers available for clientele. To overcome this undesirable situation, it is necessary to organize and conduct proper workshops on training personnel for creation and effective managing of digital libraries. It is also of paramount important to establish extended in-house networking and internet facilities in the libraries.

Keywords: University Library, Special Library, Digital Library, Digital Library Software